

workers and chased them out of their country. The people of Afghanistan have suffered too long under Taliban rule.

That suffering provides us with a task. I'm asking every child in America to give not a dime but a dollar to a specific cause, a relief effort for the children of Afghanistan. And I want to report to the Nation that after I laid out this initiative last night and confirming it here at your convention, that I've received the first dollar. *[Laughter]* It came from Justin Washington.

I know Justin pretty well. *[Laughter]* I got to see him in the Oval Office, and he made it clear, his boots were better than mine. *[Laughter]* But Justin, I want to thank you. Justin knows what I know: A dollar today is roughly equivalent to what a dime was in the late 1930's. It's an appropriate place to announce this initiative of compassion.

I hope American children in their classrooms and families in their homes put a dollar in an envelope and send it to America's Fund for Afghan Children, to the White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue—*[laughter]*—Washington, DC 20509. *[Laughter]*

Schools, community and youth organizations can organize events to raise money for this cause. And they can, at the same time, demonstrate compassion and mercy in this hour of need. This effort is an opportunity to help others while teaching our children a valuable lesson about service and character. We will work with the Red Cross to make sure the money is used for food and medicine, to make sure the money provides hope and help to the children of Afghanistan.

We'll also coordinate with the Administrator of USAID to ensure that our efforts build on the important humanitarian work already being done.

During the last month, Americans have been extraordinarily generous in their giving of time and money. We still face many needs and challenges at home. And that's why Americans should continue supporting community-based organizations like the March of Dimes, which is doing so much good all across the country.

And Americans are the most generous people on Earth. And because the suffering is so great, I know we need to lend a hand to the children who live a world a halfway

around the—a place a halfway around the world from here.

By embracing Afghan children, we assert the American ideal. Our Nation is the greatest force for good in the world history. We value the lives and rights of all people. Our compassion and concern do not stop at our border. They reach across the world. Americans are determined to fight for our security, no question about it. And we're all equally determined to live up to our principles. And I hope, I hope all Americans will help us show those principles to the entire world.

Thank you for what you do, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in the Regency Ballroom at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gary Forsee, chairman, Jennifer L. Howse, president, and Justin Washington, national ambassador, March of Dimes.

## Remarks at a Reception Honoring Hispanic Heritage Month

October 12, 2001

Thank you all. Thank you very much. Please be seated. *Bienvenidos*. Here's the way I like to put it: *Mi casa blanca es su casa blanca*. *[Laughter]*

We're gathered here to celebrate the contributions of Hispanic-Americans to our life. In a few moments, I will sign an Executive order creating a commission on educational excellence for Hispanic-Americans, to open new doors of opportunity for Hispanic boys and girls all across America.

Before I do, I have some thanks. First, I want to thank *mi abogado y tambien mi amigo*. I want to thank Judge Gonzales for his sound advice. I love him dearly.

I want to thank the boys and girls for leading us in the pledge. Thank you all for being here. I don't know whether you know this or not, but 52 million other children joined us at 2 o'clock today, saying the Pledge of Allegiance, all across America. The past weeks have given new meaning to those old words and have only deepened our allegiance to our Nation and to our flag.

I want to thank Jaci and Arturo for lending their voice and horn to this room. We've had

some great music here throughout the years, and it's going to be hard to top what we heard today. I want to thank them both for coming. I want to thank all *los voces Americanos* that sang today. I am honored that you all are here. I love your music. I love your passion. I love your love for America. And we're glad you're here.

And I'm glad America got to see some of our country's finest artists perform here in the East Room on a song that talks about the solidarity and love for our country, a love that knows no bounds, a love that knows no culture, a love that everybody can share who's lucky enough to live in America. And you all are welcome. Thank you for coming.

I want to thank Emilio, especially, for lending your talents. The last time you were here was Cinco de Mayo. I said, "The next time you come, make sure you bring Gloria." [Laughter] It just goes to show the power of the Presidency. [Laughter] I want to thank Luis Palau, as well, for your prayer. And I want to thank Don Francisco, as well. It's good to see you again, sir. Thank you for coming.

I'm proud that there's *dos Embajadores aqui, uno de Mexico*—good to see you, Ambassador Juan Jose Bremer from Mexico, *y tambien—y tambien el Embajador de España esta aqui*, Javier—*bienvenidos*, Javier. I should have said there was three Ambassadors. I meant, two Ambassadors to America, but one of—a friend of mine, I named the Ambassador to the Dominican Republic has joined us, Hans Hertell. Hans, good to see you, Hans.

I named a person who participated in Operation Pedro Pan. For those of you who don't know Operation Pedro Pan, years ago, Cuban moms and dads put their sons or daughters on a boat to America in order that they could live freely. They were uncertain about their own fate, but they knew they wanted their children to grow up in America, one of whom is now here. He's in my Cabinet, Mel Martinez.

I named a good man to be on the U.S. Court of Appeals, the DC Circuit, a man named Miguel Estrada. Miguel, where are you? Thank you for coming, Miguel.

You know, there's a lot of talk in Washington about making sure we have diversity

on our courts, and there should be. I ask the Senate to move this man's nomination through. He's smart. He's capable. He needs that job. America needs to have him on the bench. Get him moving, before it's too late.

Ambassador to the OAS representing America, Roger Noriega. There he is—Roger. How are you? The next time, we'll try to get you a better seat. [Laughter] Either that, or show up on time. [Laughter]

Al Rascon, who is the National Director of the U.S. Selective Service and, more importantly, a recipient of the Medal of Honor, is with us today. Thank you, Al, for being here.

A man whose service has been called upon a lot, particularly for the businesses that were severely affected during the attack, Hector Barreto, the SBA Director. Leslie Sanchez, who is the Executive Director to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. Where are you, Leslie? Leslie, right in front of me. The Treasurer of the United States, Rosario Marin—Rosario. Cristina Saralegui—where is she? Cristina.

As you know, I used to be associated with the baseball world. And we're honored to have some Major Leaguers here with us today. And we've got a great White Sox outfielder. *Donde esta Senor Ordonez* from the White Sox? There he is. *Como esta*, Magglio? Welcome. Glad you're here.

Another Ordonez, Rey Ordonez. Good to see you, Rey. Thank you for coming. Maybe next year. [Laughter]

Nelson Figueroa *de la Phillies*. Good to see you, Nelson. Thank you for coming. I'll get you afterwards. And from the San Francisco Giants, Russ Ortiz. Russ, thank you for coming. I'm honored you all are here. Thanks for coming. Thanks for setting a good example. Thanks for understanding that people look at you off the field of play as well as on the field of play. It's important that there be—young boys and girls look up to our baseball players and see a good example, and you're setting that. We're honored that you're here with us.

We also have three with us today who represent the thousands of Hispanic-Americans who serve in law enforcement and public safety. It's been a particularly trying time in

New York City for the firefighters and police officers. Fortunately, we have three gentlemen today who represent those fine men and women—Anthony Miranda of the New York City Latino Officers Association. Anthony, thank you for coming. Let me try this a different way. [Laughter] We have two others to introduce. [Laughter] From the Hispanic Society of the New York City Police Department, we've got Louis Hernandez and—[laughter]—from the Hispanic Society of the New York City Fire Department, Miguel Ramos. Now, thank you all for coming. Good job. Thanks for coming.

It is clear America is pulling for you all. And please pass on the word to the men and women who wear the uniform how proud we are and how much we mourn with you and how heroic you have been. The Nation appreciates it very much.

You know, obviously this is a time of great national unity. The evil ones struck, but they forgot who they were striking, evidently. They thought they were going to weaken us, but they didn't. We're strong and united. I've been amazed by the incredible acts of kindness that I've heard about. And obviously, we've all been impressed by the acts of heroism. This is the good news that has come during this tragedy. We've all come to realize how much we need each other.

Today there's been another reported case of anthrax in New York City at NBC News. And it has got to cause concern for our Nation. But I want everybody in the country to know we're responding rapidly. First of all, the person is feeling fine. She's doing well. She obviously didn't ingest enough to cause death, thank God. But we've got teams on the ground—the CDC, Center for Disease Control, the FBI, working closely with local agencies to respond quickly.

Our Nation is still in danger. But the Government is doing everything in our power to protect our citizenry. We need each other more than ever, and we're responding as quickly and as forcefully as we can.

The American people need to go about their lives. We cannot let the terrorists lock our country down. We can't let terrorists, a few evildoers, hold us hostage. Our Government will fight terrorism across the seas, and we'll fight it here at home. And the American

people need to fight terrorism, as well, by going to work, going to ball games, getting on airplanes, singing with joy and strength, like you all did today. They will not take this country down.

We will not be cowed, and we're certainly not going to be divided. The evil ones, as well as the rest of the world, are learning that we're a nation made up of many cultures, many races, and many religions, but we are one strong nation.

We've suffered loss together; we have entered a mighty struggle together; and we will prevail together. The diversity of America has always been—always been—a great strength of this country. Here, you can be proud of your cultural heritage, proud of your ancestry, proud of your native language, and still be a proud American.

We see the spirit of pride today, most vividly in the ties between our country and *los que viven en Latin America—y tambien el sur de America*. A lifetime in Texas has given me many things to be thankful for; one of them, for certain, is my appreciation for the Hispanic culture. I realize how much the Hispanic culture has enriched my State. And I realize how much the Hispanic culture enriches my Nation, as well.

This month, our country recognizes just how much we owe to the Hispanic culture and, more important, to the Hispanic-Americans we're proud to call our fellow citizens. And we do so—as we do so, we recognize as well our obligation to ensure that every American has an equal place in our society from the earliest years in life.

This Nation of immigrant heritage believes that all children, whatever their circumstances, deserve a chance to learn and rise and succeed. This principle has guided my education reforms as we work to raise the standards of public schools across America and bring hope to every classroom for every child—I mean every child, not just a few, not just those whose parents may speak English. We want educational excellence *para todos que viven en este pais*.

So today I am creating a commission to help chart the path to greater achievement amongst Hispanic-American students in every part of our country. I am pleased to sign this order in front of such distinguished

company. And I'm proud—I'm proud—to be the President of such a great nation.

Thank you for coming. And God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Albert R. Gonzales, White House Counsel; Jaci Vasquez, who sang the National Anthem; trumpet player Arturo Sandoval; entertainer Gloria Estefan and her husband, Emilio Estefan, Jr.; Dr. Luis Palau, president, Luis Palau Evangelistic Association, who gave the invocation; Don Francisco, host of *Sabado Gigante*; Spanish Ambassador to the U.S. Francisco Javier Ruperez; Christina Saralegui, host of *El Show de Christina*; Rey Ordonez, shortstop, New York Mets; Anthony Miranda, president, Latino Officers Association—City of New York; Louis Hernandez, president, NYPD Hispanic Society; and Miguel Ramos, president, NYFD Hispanic Society.

**Executive Order 13230—President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans**  
*October 12, 2001*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to advance the development of human potential, strengthen the Nation's capacity to provide high-quality education, and increase opportunities for Hispanic Americans to participate in and benefit from Federal education programs, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1.** There is established, in the Department of Education, the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (Commission). The Commission shall consist of not more than 25 members. Twenty-one of the members shall be appointed by the President. Those members shall be representatives of educational, business, professional, and community organizations who are committed to improving educational attainment within the Hispanic community, as well as other persons deemed appropriate by the President. The President shall designate two of the appointed members to serve as Co-Chairs of the Commission. The other four members of the Commission shall be ex officio members, one each from the Department of Education, the Department of Housing and

Urban Development, the Department of the Treasury, and the Small Business Administration. The ex officio members shall be the respective Secretaries of those agencies and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, or their designees.

**Sec. 2.** The Commission shall provide advice to the Secretary of Education ("Secretary") and shall issue reports to the President, as described in section 7 below, concerning:

(a) the progress of Hispanic Americans in closing the academic achievement gap and attaining the goals established by the President's "No Child Left Behind" educational blueprint;

(b) the development, monitoring, and coordination of Federal efforts to promote high-quality education for Hispanic Americans;

(c) ways to increase parental, State and local, private sector, and community involvement in improving education; and

(d) ways to maximize the effectiveness of Federal education initiatives within the Hispanic community.

**Sec. 3.** There is established, in the Department of Education, an office called the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (Initiative). The Initiative shall be located at, staffed, and supported by the Department of Education, and headed by a Director, who shall be a senior level executive branch official who reports to the Secretary. The Initiative shall provide the necessary staff, resources, and assistance to the Commission and shall assist and advise the Secretary in carrying out his responsibilities under this order. The staff of the Initiative shall gather and disseminate information relating to the educational achievement gap of Hispanic Americans, using a variety of means, including conducting surveys, conferences, field hearings, and meetings, and other appropriate vehicles designed to encourage the participation of organizations and individuals interested in such issues, including parents, community leaders, academicians, business leaders, teachers, employers, employees and public officials at the local, State, and Federal levels. To the extent permitted by law, executive